

JULY 1997

The Federal Geographic Data Committee

The Federal Geographic Data Committee (FGDC) is an interagency committee that promotes the coordinated development, use, sharing, and dissemination of geospatial data on a national basis. The FGDC was established by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) in its 1990 revision of Circular A-16, "Coordination of Surveying, Mapping, and Related Spatial Data Activities." The FGDC is composed of representatives from 14 Cabinet level and independent Federal agencies (see table). Currently, Secretary Bruce Babbitt of the Department of the Interior chairs the FGDC.

To coordinate various themes of geospatial data that will contribute to the development of a National Spatial Data Infrastructure, OMB assigned lead coordination responsibilities to specific Federal agencies. This thematic organization is reflected in the FGDC subcommittee structure (see chart). FGDC working groups play a crosscutting role, dealing with issues that span many subcommittees. Working groups have been formed to establish guidelines for preserving data, to establish a National Geospatial Data Clearinghouse, to provide for the creation of framework data, and to develop and implement data standards. New working groups are striving to facilitate data sharing through common schemes to identify and classify Earth cover, to monitor environmental change, and to deal with facilities and other large-scale data issues.

The Federal Geographic Data Committee (FGDC)

Chair — Bruce Babbitt, Secretary of the Interior

Department of Agriculture — Tom Hebert, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment

Department of Commerce — William O. Mehuron, Acting Deputy Under Secretary for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Department of Defense — corepresentatives: Steven Stockton, Chief, Engineering Division, Directorate of Civil Works, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and Walter Senus, Chief Scientist, National Imagery & Mapping Agency

Department of Energy — Jay Hakes, Administrator, Energy Information Administration

Department of Housing and Urban Development — Richard Burk, Director, Community Connection

Department of the Interior — Mark Schaefer, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Water and Science

Department of State — William B. Wood, The Geographer

Department of Transportation — T. R. Lakshmanan, Director, Bureau of Transportation Statistics

Environmental Protection Agency — Al Pesachowitz, Acting Assistant Administrator for Administration and Resource Management

Federal Emergency Management Agency — Gordon Fullerton, Director, Engineering Division, Information Technology Services Directorate

Library of Congress — Ralph Ehrenberg, Chief, Geography and Map Division

National Archives and Records Administration — Kenneth Thibodeau, Director, Center for Electronic Records

National Aeronautics and Space Administration — Mike Mann, Deputy Associate Director for Management

National Science Foundation — Dr. Robert Corell, Assistant Director

Tennessee Valley Authority — Alan Voss, Project Engineer, Geographic Information and Engineering Department

FGDC COORDINATION

Circular A-16 defined specific coordination responsibilities for the FGDC to include:

Promoting the development, maintenance, and management of distributed data bases of geospatial data that are national in scope.

Encouraging the development and implementation of standards and exchange formats.

Promoting technology development, transfer and exchange.

Interacting with other Federal coordinating bodies that deal with geospatial data.

Publishing technical and management reports.

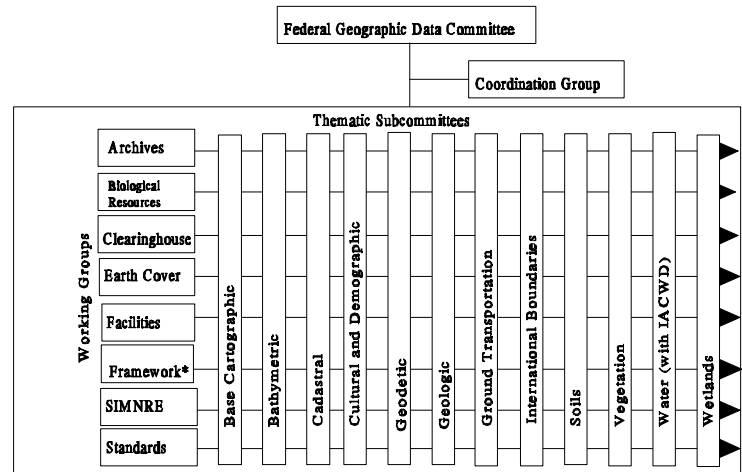
THE FGDC AND THE NATIONAL SPATIAL DATA INFRASTRUCTURE

To extend the scope of Circular A-16 in support of the National Information Infrastructure, President Clinton issued Executive Order 12906, "Coordinating Geographic Data Acquisition and Access: The National Spatial Data Infrastructure (NSDI)." NSDI encompasses the technology, policies, standards and human resources necessary to acquire, process, store, distribute, and improve the use of geospatial data. In the Executive Order, the FGDC was given an expanded role in coordinating the NSDI with a mandate to involve State, local, and tribal governments, academia, and the private sector.

Through its committees and working groups the FGDC supports activities in areas crucial to the NSDI: development of a National Clearinghouse for spatial data, development of standards for sharing geospatial data, creation of a national digital geospatial data framework of basic data themes, and promotion of cooperative ventures and cost sharing agreements for geospatial data among partners outside the Federal sector.

FGDC ACTIVITIES

The FGDC committees and working groups provide the basic structure for institutions and individuals to



* - Includes representatives of State and local government.

FGDC Subcommittees and Lead Departments

Base Cartographic - Interior	Geologic - Interior	Water - cosponsored with the Interagency Advisory Committee on Water Data
Bathymetric - Commerce	Ground Transportation - Transportation	
Cadastral - Interior	International Boundaries - State	
Cultural and Demographic - Commerce	Soils - Agriculture	
Geodetic - Commerce	Vegetation - Agriculture	
		Wetlands - Interior

come together to discuss and work on various aspects of the implementation of the NSDI.

The FGDC also sponsors other activities. In recent years the FGDC has:

- sponsored national forums on geospatial data;
- instituted a grant program to support cooperative agreements for Clearinghouse, metadata, and framework development with participants from State and local governments and academia;
- developed and adopted a content standard for digital geospatial metadata;
- developed a reference model to define the standards development process;
- developed user training materials and conducted workshops throughout the country to support the metadata standard and Clearinghouse efforts;
- supported the continuing evolution of the National Geospatial Data Clearinghouse;
- developed a framework plan and identified framework pilot projects to test the proposed concept and to improve the plan.

For more information on the FGDC or to receive the committee's newsletter, please contact us at the above address.